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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 275th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 November 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine

2. **The Chairman** drew attention to four draft resolutions, entitled respectively "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat" and "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", which were to be submitted to the General Assembly under agenda item 39 entitled "Question of Palestine". The texts, which were based on the resolutions adopted at the fifty-seventh session, had been streamlined and updated to reflect recent developments.

3. The draft resolution on the Committee, contained two new paragraphs (the fourth preambular paragraph and paragraph 6). The sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine was also new. No substantive changes had been made to the draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.

4. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolutions on the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information.

5. *It was so decided.*

6. **The Chairman**, drawing attention to some substantive changes to the draft resolution entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine" said that the tenth preambular paragraph had been expanded and that the eleventh, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth preambular paragraphs were new. Paragraph 4 which read "*Calls for* the implementation of the Road Map and stresses in this regard the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism" and paragraph 6, which read "*Stresses* the urgent need for Israel to stop and reverse the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which is in contradiction to relevant provisions of international law" were also new.

7. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

8. *It was so decided.*

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

9. **The Chairman** recalled that, at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which had been convened at the request of the Arab States because the Security Council had failed to take action on the issue of Israel's separation wall, the Assembly had adopted resolution A/RES/ES-10/13 entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The following week the Secretary-General had issued a statement welcoming the Geneva Accord which, while not a substitute for official diplomatic negotiations, was a courageous attempt to break the current stalemate and compatible with the Quartet's peace process. The cabinet formed by the new Palestinian Prime Minister was due to be approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council on 12 November.

10. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the most important development in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been the ongoing construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had led to the confiscation of hundreds of dunums of land, thereby depriving tens of thousands of Palestinians of their livelihood. Completion of the wall would create three to four Bantustans. That situation would render a two-State solution impossible and stymie peace in the region for a long time. For that reason, further construction of the wall must be halted and the existing sections must be dismantled. Owing to one member's veto, the Security Council had been unable to adopt a resolution on the wall. The General Assembly had, however, adopted resolution A/RES/ES-10/13, which inter alia requested the Secretary-General to present a report on the wall.

11. Endeavours to streamline the resolutions on Palestine that would be submitted under several General Assembly agenda items had resulted in a decision by the sponsors to present four, rather than the

traditional seven, resolutions on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The United States of America had, however, submitted a draft resolution on the subject without holding prior consultations with the Palestinians and Arabs. In an effort to prevent a different legal and political basis being created for UNRWA's activities the Arab Group had proposed five amendments to the text. When the time came for the draft resolution to be put to the vote the Arab Group would make every effort to prevent its adoption since it would enable the occupying Power to evade its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

12. The draft resolution currently being circulated by Israel in the Third Committee appeared to deal with assistance to Israeli children but was in reality an anti-Palestinian text that dealt with political issues far beyond the competence of that Committee. It must be defeated.

13. The Palestinian position on Israeli credentials was in line with that of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A perfectly legal objection was being made to having the credentials extend to any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. That reservation was in no way a challenge to the Israeli credentials per se.

14. A draft resolution sponsored by the Russian Federation and endorsing the road map had, unaccountably, been declared not acceptable to the Israeli Government, that would seem to be indicative of Israel's true position on the matter.

15. There had been two noteworthy developments outside the United Nations. An agreement known as the Geneva Understandings had been concluded between politicians from both sides and even though they had no official status, the conclusions reached could be an incentive to restarting formal negotiations. The Israeli reaction had been negative, but the Understandings had received support from the Palestinian side, the Secretary-General and the United States Secretary of State.

16. Also, the newly formed Palestinian government was scheduled to be submitted for approval to the Palestinian Legislative Council the following day and was expected to receive a vote of confidence, allowing it to begin functioning immediately thereafter. Despite outside pressures, Palestine had managed to preserve its presidential system with its symbolic value intact but, by amending the Basic Law, to create an office of prime minister as well, thus achieving a good balance.

United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine, 16-17 December 2003, and the Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, 18 December 2003, Beijing

17. **The Chairman** expressed the Committee's gratitude to the Government of China for having agreed to host the two events. The Committee's delegation to Beijing would comprise the two Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and himself, accompanied by the Observer for Palestine. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme for the two meetings set out in working paper No. 5.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **Mr. Xie** Yunliang (Observer for China) welcomed the convening of the two meetings in Beijing and said that his Government intended to work with the secretariat to make them a success.

20. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the fact that China would be hosting the meetings would give them greater weight. He thanked China for its solidarity with the Palestinian cause over the years and especially for the recent positions it had taken in the Security Council.

Other matters

21. **The Chairman** urged all members of the Committee and all observers to arrange to be represented at the forthcoming International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the ambassadorial level, in order to mark its special importance.

The meeting rose at 11.50 p.m.